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## Blue Star Memorial Placed at Retsil Home

### BLUE STAR MEMORIAL HISTORY

The Blue Star Memorial Marker Program of the National Garden Clubs, Inc. began in 1945 to honor the men and women serving in the Armed Forces during World War II. The name was chosen for the star on flags displayed in homes and businesses denoting a family member serving. Garden clubs pictured a ribbon of living memorial plantings traversing every state. The designation of Blue Star Highways was achieved through petitions to the state legislatures and cooperation with the Departments of Transportation. A uniform marker was designed to identify the Highways.

The Blue Star Memorial Program grew to extend thousands of miles across continental U.S., Alaska, and Hawaii. All men and women who have served, are serving, or will serve in the Armed Forces of the United States are included.

### *Performance Development Plans*

Congratulations to all WDVA staff members for completing your PDPs! We are again at 100% compliance with this requirement.

The PDP is the foundation of Performance Confirmation, a performance management tool which will allow the agency to recognize non-represented employees for exceptional performance which contributes to the overall performance of the agency.

It was a beautiful Saturday morning April 14th, the day the National Garden Club was to dedicate the Blue Star Memorial By-Way Marker at the WA Veterans Home.

At 2:00 p.m. when the program was to start the skies clouded up and poured on the residents and staff attending the event.

In spite of the weather, Cathy Hall, Director of the Cross Sound District of Garden Clubs began the dedication. She introduced special guest First Gentleman Mike Gregoire, who shared his memories of seeing the By-Way markers along the highways he traveled with his father.

The Chairwoman for the WA State Blue Star Markers,

Dorothy Dwyer gave a history of the Blue Star Markers program. Then June Willard, President of the WA Federation of Garden Clubs read the dedication remarks, as Jon Clontz, Chief of Homes Operations accepted the marker on behalf of the Home residents.



First Gentleman Mike Gregoire was given his own picture of the marker by resident Carl Conn.



(Left to Right) First Gentleman Mike Gregoire; June Willard, President, WA Federation of Garden Clubs; Senator Derek Kilmer; Cathy Hall, Director, Cross Sound Dist. of Garden Clubs; Dorothy Dwyer, Chair., WA Blue Star Markers; and Jon Clontz, Chief of Homes Operations.

By the end of the program, the sun had again come out and the umbrellas were put aside.

Others participating in the program included Resident Trish Hurley who led the Pledge of Allegiance, Chaplain Ron Hempel and the South Kitsap Jr. ROTC. The Summit Singers gave a terrific musical performance and Home Pharmacist David Smith and David Richardson played Taps.

# DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE



John E. Lee  
WDVA Director

## Improving Services to Homeless Veterans

As a way to publicly measure how state agencies are performing, Governor Gregoire instituted a Government Management, Accountability and Performance or GMAP system.

When I attended my first GMAP meeting in November of 2005, Governor Gregoire asked me point blank what I was going to do to improve services for Homeless Veterans.

At the time, I didn't have a clear picture of what this 'improvement' would look like. Today, I can not only describe for you what it looks like, but I can tell you it's working! Here are some examples:

**Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program for Women:** This \$150,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Labor provides employment and training services to homeless women veterans in King, Snohomish, Pierce, Kitsap and Thurston Counties. Last year, WDVA enrolled 248 honorably discharged women veterans in the program and

provided 197 with housing and 187 with job placements at an average wage of \$11.08 per hour.

**Homeless Veterans Reintegration Project in Rural WA:** A \$200,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Labor also provides employment and training services to homeless veterans in 22 Eastern Washington Counties. From July 1, 2006, through December 31, 2006, WDVA has enrolled 65 honorably discharged veterans and assisted 50 veterans with housing and employment, with an average starting wage of \$10.41 per hour.

**Incarcerated Veterans Project:** This state-county partnership began in King County and addresses the unique needs of veterans in the county jail systems. The program intervenes, advocates and provides case management for honorably discharged veterans in order to reduce the chances these veterans will re-offend. In turn, this reduces the likelihood they will end up in our state prison system. In 2006, 888 veterans were served. 243 were enrolled in the program, 100 were assisted with housing and 49 were assisted with job placements. Currently, this program is being implemented by Pierce County and our goal is to assist all interested counties with setting up similar programs.

**King County Veterans Reintegration Services:** A partnership between WDVA and King County, this program assists veterans with chronic issues such as homelessness, addiction, lack of job skills and mental illness. In 2006, the program served 3,140

veterans, provided financial assistance to 1,274 veterans and housed 501 homeless or soon to be homeless veterans.

**Retsil Transitional Housing Program:** This program will accept its first veteran in September, 2007, and will provide transitional housing for up to 40 veterans who need assistance with re-entering the workforce. Veterans will receive assistance with barriers that are keeping them from sustaining housing or employment.

**Centralized Admissions Team:** This team is responsible for admissions at the three State Veterans Homes: Retsil, Orting and Spokane. In 2006, they were successful in placing four homeless veterans, who were in need of long-term care services, into our Veterans Homes.

While the Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs has always prided itself on being a good steward of state resources, we are now going one step further by measuring and tracking performance to better demonstrate why we are a good investment.

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**As always, if you know a veteran in need of assistance, please have them contact us at 1-800-562-2308.**

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## Test Scores Greatly Improve After 3-day Training

WDVA sponsored the 2007 "Service Officer Training Conference" at the Red Lion Olympia Hotel on April 3, 4, 5. This was the fourth consecutive year in which WDVA has planned and coordinated this very significant and productive training event for Service Officers from the Veteran Service Organizations (VSOs) within the state of Washington. This year 136 participants attended.

For the first time, this year's conference also included the participation of 11 members of the Ladies Auxiliary from three of the VSOs; The American Legion Ladies Auxiliary; AMVETS Ladies Auxiliary and; the Veterans of Foreign Wars Ladies Auxiliary. These 11 women were among 60 who attended the WDVA-sponsored "Ladies Auxiliary Conference", held last September. These ladies indicated a strong desire for further training so that they could also begin to provide claims assistance to veterans.

The superb instructors for the conference were selected because of their knowledge and expertise in the subjects that VSO Service Directors, and many of the Service Officers themselves, had identified during the past year as areas in which more training was desired or needed.



WDVA staffers attending the Service Officers Training Conference. Richard Stewart and Lynda Reese, of the Seattle office organized the event.

In order to gauge the effectiveness of the training, the conference included a Pre-Test to all attendees during the first morning. The Pre-Test consisted of questions provided in advance by each of the instructors. Later, on the last morning of the conference, the exact same test was administered, and the average grades on the 60-question tests were compared. The following averages were achieved by each of the three Break-Out Groups:

Red Group:	Pre-Test---70%	Post-Test---94%
Blue Group:	Pre-Test---68%	Post-Test---91%
Green Group:	Pre-Test---68%	Post-Test---93%

These demonstrated improvements in the knowledge of these 109 "contributing" Service Officers are very gratifying, and signify both their attentiveness during the training sessions and their growing competence as Claims Advocates on behalf of our state's veterans and family members.

The "2007 Service Officer Training Conference" was evaluated as a highly successful and productive event by all participants. Attendees included Service Officers from the following VSOs: the African-American PTSD Association; The American Legion; AMVETS; the Military Order of the Purple Heart; the National Association for Black Veterans, Inc; Paralyzed Veterans of America; The Veterans of Foreign Wars; the Vietnam Veterans of America; the Washington Department of Veterans Affairs; as well as four Tribal Veteran Representatives.

### *Are You Familiar with Agency Policies?*

All staff need to take a moment to review the policies dealing with Workplace Violence and Firearms in the Workplace.

The purpose is to reinforce WDVA's zero-tolerance policy on workplace violence and carrying weapons on WDVA grounds. The policies are available on the V-NET at: <http://isdev/policies.htm>

These are not new policies; however, they were updated to include Director John Lee's signature. In addition, a new section was added to Policy # 680.200 which directs WDVA employees, work studies, contractors, residents and volunteers to notify a supervisor or program manager if they witness or have knowledge of any person who may have weapons on WDVA grounds.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to ask!



# Budget Update

The 2007 Legislature approved a \$110 million operating budget for WDVA, a 20% increase from the 2005-2007 biennium! This budget will allow WDVA to continue providing the level and quality of service our veterans deserve and also re-affirms the state's commitment to Serving Those Who Served!

In addition to existing programs serving veterans and their families in Washington State, WDVA will be able to do the following:

## **Serving Veterans and Families in their Communities:**

\$1.3 million and 4 staff to expand the Veterans Enhancement Project. This WDVA and Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) partnership identifies veterans & families being served by DSHS programs who could qualify for more robust veterans benefits administered by the Federal VA. This collaborative effort will result in savings to DSHS programs.

## **Providing Conservation Corps Opportunities:**

\$1.3 million and 1.5 staff to expand the Veterans Conservation Corps. This pilot expansion of the VCC, as described by SSB 5164 will work with community and technical colleges to provide training and certification for veterans who perform full-time volunteer conservation work. Each year, 30-40 veterans will be eligible for educational stipends or contracts to perform conservation work. \$340,000 of the total \$1.3 million in funding is to continue the VCC program begun in the 2005-07 biennium.



## **Honoring Veterans in their Final Resting Place:**



\$206,000 from the General Fund and \$7.8 million from the Capital Budget to establish the Eastern Washington State Veterans Cemetery. A Cemetery Director position is also provided. This initiative has been the top priority for the veterans' community. WDVA plans to break ground on the cemetery in November 2008, and open the facility in November 2009.

## **Healing the Seen & Unseen Wounds of War:**

\$200,000 for additional Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) treatment for veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan.

## **Helping Schools Serve Military Kids:**



\$50,000 to create the Operation Military Kids partnership to develop and provide information to teachers and schools about the impact on families of post traumatic stress and war trauma. The program will help educators serve nearly 8,000 school-age children whose parents are currently deployed or returning from active duty.

## **Honoring our Commitment to Veterans at State Veterans Homes:**

\$1.7 million and 15.4 full-time equivalent employees are provided to ensure the State Veterans Homes meet the federal hours of care requirements. These additional staff members will ensure veterans in our Homes continue to receive the highest quality of care.

## **Helping Homeless Veterans**

\$612,000 from the State General Fund, \$711,000 in Federal Funds and 4.5 full-time equivalent employees are provided to help homeless veterans move toward independent living through a transitional housing program. The program will assist up to forty veterans at a time with assessment, treatment, education and job search activities. This program is scheduled to begin serving veterans by September 2007.

## **Assisting Veteran-Owned Businesses:**

\$35,000 is provided to implement Senate Bill 5253, Veteran Owned Businesses. WDVA will develop a registry and website of veteran-owned businesses and create a decal for such businesses.



# Salute to Armed Forces Night with the Mariners

The Seattle Mariners hosted a 5th Salute to Armed Forces Night on Tuesday, April 3. The pre-game festivities included recognizing active duty personnel, as well as veteran service organizations. Team members joined the veterans on the baseline during the Pledge of Allegiance.

WDVA and Washington's Lottery teamed up to provide scratch tickets to the first 3,000 veterans who visited the WDVA booth! And M.O.M.S. (Mothers of Military Support) provided 5,000 Support Our Troops magnets!



(Left to Right) Colleen Gilbert, Lisa Benavidez and Heidi Audette attended to Armed Forces Night to hand out yellow ribbons and scratch tickets to veterans. Other staff members helping included: Randy Graham, Donna Johnson, Julie Almanzor and Miriam Young. Colleen's daughter Tiffany Hills also helped. Prior to the event, Tiffany & Colleen attached the Armed Forces license plate flyer to all 5,000 yellow ribbon magnets.

## Orting Honors Volunteers



The Soldiers Home honored their Volunteer Corps on Thursday, April 26. Many of the 50 volunteers were unable to attend this year because of various illnesses and other appointments, but the volunteers who did attend enjoyed the banquet, especially the lunch that was prepared by the Dining Room staff.

Superintendent Mary Prentice thanked the volunteers for giving over 7,000 hours this year to our Veterans at Orting. She expressed that she knows through her many years working in the long-term care field, how valuable volunteers are to an organization. She thanked the volunteers for helping to make their facility a better Home for the residents.

All volunteers received a certificate of appreciation for the many hours contributed this year and each received a potted flower as well.

"We could not have the Activities program we have at the Soldiers Home without the many volunteers and organizations that participate in almost every event held at the Home," said Lynn Zemke Activities & Volunteer Program Manager.

## Eastern Washington Cemetery Update

Our thanks goes to our Governor, State Senators and State Representatives who approved the Eastern Washington State Veterans Cemetery budget and House Bill 1292, authorizing WDVA to establish the cemetery. With the passage of the budget and the legislation, we can also finalize the Pre-Application to the Federal VA State Cemetery Grants Program. In addition, the state budget allows WDVA to recruit for and hire a Cemetery Director in July of 2007. This announcement will be posted by May 10<sup>th</sup> on the WDVA web site: [www.dva.wa.gov](http://www.dva.wa.gov) (click on WDVA Jobs).



## KUDOS



Kate Hambrecht

The Baldrige Leadership Team (BLT) was honored recently for their significant commitment to the Quality process, including attending WSQA examiner training, which takes 60 hours or more to complete. Each member exhibited the passion and dedication necessary to complete the training and then develop and submit the WSQA assessment, making WDVA the first agency to do so.

The purpose of the BLT was to champion Performance Excellence throughout the agency and across the functional boundaries by implementing and using the concepts and tools based on the Baldrige Criteria. These tools help WDVA increase its capabilities, expand its knowledge and skills, improve its performance, and achieve superior results.

Team members worked very diligently to take a major step towards Performance Excellence by being the first agency to write and conduct the Washington State Quality Award survey. Team members included Kate Hambrecht; Sally Shunn; Cyndee Baugh; Kaye Conrath; and Dariush Khaleghi, Team Sponsor.



Sally Shunn

### WDVA Managers Receive Gov Leadership Award



**Jim Rising** (left) and **Dariush Khaleghi** recently received the Governor's Award for their Outstanding Leadership in Management. This award offers special recognition to those who have demonstrated excellence in carrying out their responsibilities. They are commended for their focus on performance results that were clearly demonstrated during 2006. A luncheon to formally recognize them will be held in the Governor's Mansion May 29th.

### *Kudos to the WDVA IT Team, again!*

As companies and agencies across the country scrambled to find solutions for the earlier than usual Daylight Savings Time, our IT Team was busy installing the necessary upgrades and fixing problems before they occurred. Thanks to their hard work over several weekends before the time change, WDVA eased into the new Daylight Savings Time without any system-wide problems.

If you need any assistance from the IT Team, simply click on the 'IS Work Order' link on the V-Net Home Page.

Your IT Team is made up of:

Dariush Khaleghi, Jeff Kiper, Bob Murphy, Dale Cain, Tracy Saulino, James Topel and project staff-member Tom Baugh.

## Gov. Gregoire Announces Boards and Commissions Appointments

### *Governor's Affirmative Action Policy Committee*

**Dariush Khaleghi** has been appointed to a term effective March 16, 2007, ending May 31, 2010. DK is the Chief of IS, HR and strategic planning, and was the interim executive director for the Human Rights Commission from 2003 - 2004. He is a member of the Thurston County Cultural Diversity and Human Rights Commission and is a senior mediator for the Thurston County Dispute Resolution Center.

The Committee reviews the state affirmative action program and reviews and approves state agency affirmative action plans.

### *Industrial Safety and Health Board*

**Lyn Hofland** has been appointed to a term effective March 16, 2007, ending December 31, 2008. Lyn is a supply officer at the Washington Veterans Home. She works on workplace safety issues within the Washington Federation of State Employees.

The Board is a non-profit organization that works to prevent industrial injuries and occupational diseases among employees. They advise the Governor on how to promote the efficient, safe, healthful and productive operation of industries within Washington.



# Key Positions Filled

## DNS Selection for Retsil



Ed Dolle has been selected for the position of Director of Nursing Services at Retsil. Ed has done an excellent job the last month as the acting DNS.

Ed was born and raised in Spokane and is a veteran of the Navy and Marine Corps where he began serving in 1974 as a Hospital Corpsman. He graduated from Olympic College's Nursing program in the early 1980's and worked as an LPN and then as a RN in home health care.

Ed was the assistant Director of Nurses for Olympic Home Health for about a year. He left Home Health care to work at WDVA on 6/10/85, first as a charge nurse on evening shift, eventually the day shift, on what became the dementia unit. He then received a promotion into staff development because of his love of teaching and his technical skills.

Ed has worked on many different WDVA committees, been instrumental in developing nursing and agency policy and procedures, participated in several of our efforts towards electronic medical records, and done several special projects for the Agency. He has won a number of awards including the WDVA Directors Award and the Red Cross Volunteer-Paid Staff Team award.

## Dietary Manager Appointment

Marlene Weir has been selected as the Soldiers Home Dietary Manager effective May 7, 2007.

Many of you may know her from when she was the Soldiers Home's



Dietary Manager from 1999 to 2004. Ms. Weir heard about the job opening and contacted us to express her interest in returning to the Home.

The Dietary Manager position requires an individual with a wealth of knowledge in food service operations and management, budget management, DSHS/VA Survey compliance, and most importantly, a strong commitment to excellent customer service and satisfaction. Former staff and residents say she consistently demonstrated all of these skills and traits during her most recent employment with the agency.

Ms. Weir possesses nearly 30 years of successful dietary experience; almost 20 years as a Dietary Manager. She obtained her Dietary Manager certification from the Dietary Managers Association in 1989 and Food Protection Professional certification from the CFPP Board for Dietary Managers in 1997.

## Catherine Shaw Takes Training & Performance Position

Catherine Shaw has accepted the position of Training and Performance Manager. Her term began on the April 16 at the Central Office.

Catherine has been the Activities/Volunteer Program Manager at Retsil for the past 11.5 years. She was awarded the Distinguished Service Award in 2003 and 2005. In 2006 She received the Director's Award.

Catherine has been very active within the community as well,



holding President positions for two non profit boards and a support group facilitator for another organization.

As a trainer, she has presented training presentations on both state and national levels and has won several state level writing competition for innovative ideas.

This is truly an honor and privilege to have her become our Training and Performance Manager, she will bring us her positive attitude, her many years of experience, and more than anything else her deep conviction to serving veterans and their families.

## Other Personnel Changes

### Olympia New Hires

Tom Baugh, Temp IS  
Venus Bailey, VBS1 Prob  
Valerie Thompson, VBS1 Prob VEMP  
Malcolm Leach, VBS1 Prob VEMP  
Kathleen Shely, VBS1 non-perm - Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program (HVRP)  
Melinda Gourley FA1 - Vet Services

### Changes

Sandra Myrick, VBS 2 HVRP to Transition Program Bldg. 9

### Orting New Hires

Romy Rivera, AA5  
Ginny Stegmeier, LPN 2 on-call  
Erin Jordan, Rec Spec 2 - Prob  
Kirsten Smithingell, FSA 1 on-call

### Changes

Glenda Vick, Operations Mgr to Olympia  
Greg Martinez, Prom to MA5 - Olympia

### Spokane New Hires

Kathryn McGovern, LPN 2  
Jessica Miller, RN2  
Delores Gearing, LPN2 PT  
Svetlana Korchmar, On-call NAC-1  
William Coleman III, On-call FSA 1  
Joseph Grangnelli, RN2  
Natalya Pogorelova, On-call NAC-1

### Retsil New Hires

Patrick Carey, On-call LPN 2  
Stephanie Ellison, On-call NA1-C  
Shasta Wolf, On-call NA1-C  
Milagros Metcalf, Prob NA1-C  
Dennis Bunten, Promotion to Driver 2

## Stephanie aka "The Sleuth" to the Rescue!



On Wednesday, May 2, 2007 at approximately 3:10 PM, Spokane Veterans Home social workers became aware of the theft of a purse from one office and theft of a briefcase from another. Shortly thereafter, Ginny Fabbe, Psychiatric Social Worker 3 discovered that her Dodge Caravan was also missing!

Twenty four hours later, nursing assistant Stephanie Kapon and her husband, Brian, were in the right place and the right time, when she recognized a Dodge Caravan had pulled onto the opposite street and parked. Knowing Ginny's Dodge Caravan was stolen, they watched a man exiting the vehicle and walk down the block. Stephanie was not sure if it was Ginny's vehicle, so she wrote down the license plate number.

Not having a cell phone she and her husband hurried home to call Ginny. It was a match!! Stephanie then called 911 and told them she knew where a stolen vehicle was.

The dispatcher asked her for a description of the individual, clothing worn, where last seen, etc. She and her husband drove back to where the vehicle had been parked to "stake out the area".

Soon a police officer stopped and captured the suspect about a half block away from where the stakeout occurred. The alleged perpetrator was apprehended and handcuffed on the same street as where he'd left the vehicle. Stephanie and her husband drove by the suspect to confirm he was the same individual that they witnessed leaving the vehicle.

After being identified, the individual was searched and Ms. Fabbe's credit card and checkbook were found on his person. The stolen purse and briefcase were also found in the dumpster located next door to the Veterans Home.

Superintendent David Crawford, called an All Staff meeting to update staff and remind everyone about Workplace Safety and Security. DNS Patty Rodriguez, shared various approaches of what to say to visitors in the facility to confirm what their business may be. Resident and staff safety are a priority. The suspect was approached by various staff members but he simply said he did not need any assistance. He came into the facility during shift change, when there is more activity than usual.

We are very excited that Ms. Fabbe's vehicle has been returned! The suspect was charged with multiple offenses and detained. Stephanie's quick thinking, astute observation and willingness to get involved from a safe distance brought good news and a feeling of closure to this unfortunate event. Additionally, we as staff discussed our own personal awareness of who's in our building, what we can do to ensure safety for our residents and staff, what should we do if we see someone acting suspicious, where are we keeping personal items, and workplace safety.

**Thanks Stephanie for going the "extra mile!"**

## Congratulations !

**Shameka Henson**, a Work-Study student assisting in the Veterans Conservation Corps, was recently awarded an Audubon Society Scholarship to further her goals of working towards an environmental degree and profession. This \$60k scholarship in wildlife and environmental sciences will cover her last two years of Graduate work.



The Horatio Alger Association of Distinguished Americans also selected Shameka to receive their \$5k scholarship, in tribute to her honorable service to our Nation.

Shemeka has participated in several native plantings, stream monitoring activities, invasive plant removal and salmon habitat protection projects as a member of the Veterans Conservation Corps.

## Daughter's and Son's Work the Central Office



Central Office staff & family members participated in the National Take Your Daughter's and Son's To Work Day" April 26th.

After a hard days work of office chores, each of the children were given a "much coveted" WDVA Certificate of Appreciation from Director John Lee, as he thanked them for their participation and invited them all back next year.

Participates included (left to right) Bob Murphy's son Devon; Colleen Gilbert's grandson, Brycen Hills; Heidi Audette's daughter's Audery and Emma; and Barb Logan's daughter, Kaycie.